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May 19, 2004

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Docket Management System, Doc No. FAA-2004-17460-6  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Room Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Re: Docket number FAA-2004-17460, Lake Mead National Recreation Area Air Tour Management Plan Scoping

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments as part of the scoping process for development of the Lake Mead NRA Air Tour Management Plan.

I realize that Lake Mead is far from motor-free, so that the addition of airplane noise will, in many areas, have a negligible impact on user enjoyment or the overall soundscape. However, especially since much of the NRA is effectively managed for motorized recreation, it is crucially important that aircraft noise is kept far from the areas currently reserved for more quiet user experiences.

This will necessitate Air Tour planning to incorporate usage patterns prescribed by current and proposed future management of motorized watercraft. In the areas where personal watercraft and other motorized recreation is excluded or limited, aircraft overflights should be kept out of audible range.

Consideration should be given to whether Lake Mead NRA is the sort of "visual jewel" that necessitates the Park Service and FAA to provide opportunities for access via air tours. While of course there are many who would gladly participate in an air tour if available, Lake Mead is not a "natural wonder" of the order of the Grand Canyon and other popular air tour destinations; it is a man-made lake in the desert. Opportunities for enjoyment of the desert landscape from above are widespread, and perhaps Lake Mead is a place where relatively limited air tour access is appropriate.

I look forward to being kept abreast of the development of this and other ATMPs.

Sincerely,

Jim Cummings  
Executive Director, Acoustic Ecology Institute  
cummings@acousticecology.org